

# *Your Own Healthy Style*

## *A Middle-School Curriculum to Enhance Body Image*

*A project of...*

*Montana Team Nutrition*

*Montana Office of Public Instruction  
and Montana State University-Bozeman*

*April, 2003*



*This project has been funded at least in part with Federal Team Nutrition funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government*

# *Your Own Healthy Style*

## *A Middle School Curriculum to Enhance Body Image*

### **Introduction**

Differences are all around us. Differences in hair color, skin color, religion, politics and opinions. These differences make for a colorful, interesting world. Another beautiful difference to add to this list is the many shapes and sizes that the human body comes in. Very often in the mainstream media (television, magazines, etc), we only see a very narrow sampling of the wide spectrum of body shapes and sizes that exist. It's like looking at a rainbow in a world that only has two colors!

In this 4 day curriculum, you will be adding the "rest of the colors" to the rainbow by acknowledging the many differences in size, shape and style that exist in the people around you. You will have the opportunity to examine your own personal style (made up of physical and non-physical attributes) that allows you to feel great as you are. You'll learn about how the body changes shape during puberty and adolescence. Then, you'll be taking a long, hard look at media messages to determine how they are doing in terms of honoring the differences that exist in the human population. The last day of the lesson will provide you with some helpful ideas for how to live healthfully in your own style. Here you'll find some basic information on healthy eating and you'll have the opportunity to come up with ideas for staying active each and every day.

*Your Own Healthy Style:*  
*A Middle-School Curriculum to Enhance Body Image*

**Important Information for Teachers**

**Background and Need for a Curriculum Addressing Body Image**

Puberty and adolescence are times of significant physical and psychological change in young people. Awareness of appearance often intensifies during these years. In our society, which is highly focused on appearance, body image becomes central to a young person's feelings of self-esteem and self-worth. Their achievements in other aspects of life (academics, sports, volunteerism, friendships, etc) seem relatively unimportant as this focus on "how they look" overshadows all else. Compounding this problem are media messages that reinforce the illusion that self-worth should be based upon achieving an "ideal" body (very thin for the female and muscular for the male).

With the stage set as described above, it is no surprise that many young people develop feelings of shame, dissatisfaction, embarrassment rejection and even hatred toward their growing bodies. For these individuals, food may be used as a way of coping with the stresses of not achieving this unreachable ideal. They begin to spend the majority of their waking hours focusing on food, obsessing about their weight, comparing themselves to others and thinking about food, body image and exercise.

Body dissatisfaction, fear of fat, being teased, dieting and using food to deal with stress are all major risk factors associated with disordered eating. Once engaged in disordered eating, very often the individual moves back and forth between normal eating and disordered eating (during which bouts of dieting, binge eating or purging occur). Vulnerable individuals who engage in disordered eating may go on to develop a full-blown eating disorder, a psychiatric illness from which they cannot recover alone.

**Restrictive Eating Behaviors and Learning**

Whether or not an individual develops a full-blown eating disorder, simply by engaging in the restrictive patterns typical of disordered eating, their ability to learn is compromised. Some adolescent girls are rejecting entire food groups (dairy, meat) because they view them as fattening. A recent study reported in the June 2001 issue of the journal, *Pediatrics* demonstrated a link between iron-deficiency and lower cognitive achievement in children (the highest prevalence of iron deficiency being among adolescent girls). Additionally, research done by Tufts University School of Nutrition Science and Policy reports that "under-nutrition during any period of childhood can have detrimental affects on the cognitive development of children."

## **Avoiding the Serious Health Risks Associated with Eating Disorders**

Disordered eating has become a significant health risk for adolescents in the U.S. In a study report in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA, 1997) it was reported that the most critical forces influencing adolescent health-risk behavior are the family and school contexts. Classroom intervention focusing on problem solving, decision making, assertiveness, communication and stress management are thought to be most effective in reducing health-risk behaviors among adolescents. Additionally, training in media literacy can help students analyze media messages and reject those that convey the message that human value is equated with the ideal body image. Finally, by altering school policies to support acceptance of diversity and zero tolerance for harassment, the school environment can serve as a foundation on which to build positive self-esteem and body image among the pupils and ultimately decrease the incidence of eating disorders among this population.

## **Why Target Middle-School Audience?**

In the past, eating disorder prevention efforts have been focused on older adolescents. However, recent studies support the need for targeting younger children with such prevention efforts. Dieting, weight concerns and body dissatisfaction have recently been reported in children as young as 7 to 9 years old. Additionally, 40% of elementary school-aged girls reported that they have tried dieting to lose weight. Restrictive dieting is highly inappropriate for the growing child and adolescent. Growth can be impaired, including muscle and bone growth. Metabolism may be lowered which will set the child up for a lifetime of weight struggles. The ability to learn can be compromised when a child/teen is undernourished as is the case when dieting. The best formula to encourage is healthy eating combined with regular physical activity.

Clearly, the age at which eating disorders prevention efforts should be targeted must be younger than high school. By reaching out to middle-schoolers we can address this topic as their bodies are developing and their awareness of outside influences, such as the media, is increasing.

## **Curriculum Objectives**

1. Enhance feelings of self-acceptance/appreciation among student participants.
2. Increase body satisfaction among participating students.
3. Increase student awareness of the normal body changes that occur during puberty and adolescence.
4. Provide students with basic media literacy skills.
5. Empower students to take action in addressing media messages that perpetuate poor body image.
6. Enhance student knowledge pertaining to the benefits of healthy eating and an active lifestyle.
7. Lessen the risk for the development of eating disorders among students participating in curriculum.

# **Montana Education Standards Addressed Through This Curriculum**

## **Montana Health Enhancement K-12 Content and Performance Standards**

The following Health Enhancement Content and Performance Standards are addressed within the “Your Own Healthy Style” curriculum:

### **Standard 1:**

Have a basic knowledge and understanding of concepts that promote comprehensive health.

8<sup>th</sup> Grade Benchmarks addressed in this curriculum include:

1. explain the relationship between positive health behaviors and the prevention of injury, illness, disease and premature death.
2. explain the functioning and maintenance of body systems, including the reproductive system (Note: curriculum addresses growth at puberty).
3. analyze hows peers, family, heredity and environment influence personal health.

4.

### **Standard 5:**

Demonstrate the ability to use critical thinking and decision making to enhance health.

8<sup>th</sup> grade benchmarks addressed in this curriculum include:

1. individually and collaboratively apply problem-solving processes to health issues.
2. analyze how health-related decisions are influenced by the attitudes and values of individuals, families, and the community.
3. predict how decisions specific to health behavior have consequences for self and others.
4. describe personal factors that influence an individual’s health goals.
5. explain a personal health plan that addresses need, strengths and risks.
6. identify the validity of health information and how culture, media and technology influence choices.

### **Standard 6:**

Demonstrate interpersonal communication skills to enhance health.

8<sup>th</sup> grade benchmarks addressed in this curriculum include:

2. demonstrate ways to communicate care, consideration and respect of self and others.

3. demonstrate healthy ways to express needs, wants and feelings.
4. demonstrate refusal and mediation skills to enhance health.

**Standard 7:**

Demonstrate health-enhancing behaviors.

8<sup>th</sup> grade benchmarks addressed in the curriculum include:

5. demonstrate strategies to improve or maintain personal and family health.

---

---

## **Montana Standards for Media Literacy**

The following Media Literacy Content Standards are addressed within the “Your Own Healthy Style” curriculum:

**Standard 1:**

Students recognize that media messages are constructed using specific techniques which manipulate sound, image, text and movement to convey meaning.

In this curriculum, students will...

1. Recognize that media messages are constructed for specific purpose
2. Analyze different media forms and evaluate how the form influences the content
3. Evaluate how media messages are constructed to target a specific audience

**Standard 4:**

Students identify, analyze and evaluate the impacts of media on individuals and societies.

In this curriculum, students will...

1. Analyze media messages to determine point of view embedded in the message and accuracy of message.
2. Evaluate the influence the media has on behaviors and values.
3. Analyze the individual and social consequences of unethical use of media



# *Your Own Healthy Style*

*A Middle School Curriculum to  
Enhance Body Image*

## *Lesson 1:*

*So What is Your Own  
Healthy Style?*



# Lesson 1

## *So, what is your own healthy style?*

### **Summary:**

Students will be introduced to the concepts of body image and self-esteem through a brief introductory discussion. Students will then investigate how the societal vision of “beauty” is constantly changing and through this discuss the importance of identifying and honoring your own personal style so as not to fall victim to changing societal whims.

### **Objectives:**

1. Students will gain understanding of the term body image and how a positive body image is an important component to overall self-esteem.
2. Through examination of visual images, students will explore the changing definition and the fickle nature of the “ideal beauty” throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
3. Students will explore their own positive, personal attributes and identify the five most important things about themselves that contribute to their own personal style.
4. Following a discussion of the importance of honoring your own personal style, students will come up with their own “image of beauty” – one that values intellectual, personal, spiritual and physical attributes.

### **Suggested Time:**

Two class periods.

### **Materials Needed:**

- 1) Worksheet 1: Defining Body Image
- 2) Worksheet 2: Visual Images of Beauty throughout a Century
- 3) Worksheet 3: What is Your Own Healthy Style?
- 4) Worksheet 4: The Modern Image of Beauty

### **Procedure:**

#### **Day 1:**

1. Teacher initiates discussion by introducing the term body image. The contribution of positive body image to overall self-esteem is discussed. Worksheet 1 is completed during this discussion
2. Students view visual images of the “beauty ideals” over time. Discussion centers on the changing nature of this “beauty ideal”? Questions on Worksheet 2 are addressed in discussion.

*Lesson 1: So what is your own healthy style?*

**Procedure (continued):**

**Day 2:**

3. Students break out into pairs and complete the Worksheet 3, "What is Your Own Healthy Style?" Students can choose to complete this worksheet independently or may work with a partner.
4. Student, as individuals or in pairs, may choose to share the information from Worksheet 3, "What is Your Own Healthy Style?" with the group?
5. As a class, the final task is to complete Worksheet 4. Here students will come up with a definition of beauty for today's world. Students are encouraged to consider the thoughts and discussion surrounding Worksheet 3 as they come up with this Modern Image of Beauty. A wrap-up discussion pertaining to this final activity is encouraged.

## *Teacher Background Information*

### **Regarding Body Image and Self-Esteem...**

Body dissatisfaction among both men, women, girls and boys is increasing at a rapid rate. The relentless pursuit of thinness spurred on by body dissatisfaction and resulting in unhealthy dieting behaviors is considered normal behavior in today's society. However, genetically people are intended to have a wide range of body types and sizes. To attempt to become something that we are not genetically intended to become can lead to frustration and ultimately a negative body image and lowered self-esteem.

People with a negative body image are more likely to develop a life-threatening eating disorder. They are also more likely to feel depressed, isolated, have low self-esteem and to obsess about weight loss.

The key to developing a positive body image is to recognize and respect your natural shape along with all of the other attributes that combine to make you a special, unique individual.

### **What is Body Image?**

#### ***Body image is...***

- How you see yourself – both in the mirror and in your mind
- How you feel about your body
- How you feel in your body...how do you sense and control your body as you move...are you comfortable in your body?
- What you believe about your appearance...do you have fond memories related to your appearance, do you make generalizations or assumptions related to your appearance?

#### ***When you have a Positive Body Image, you...***

- Appreciate and celebrate your natural body shape
- Understand that a person's physical appearance is only a part of who they are and that physical appearance says little about their character or value as a person.
- Have a clear perception of your shape – you see your body as it really is and feel comfortable in it.

#### ***When you have a Negative Body Image, you may...***

- Have a distorted perception of your shape – you see your body differently than it actually is.
- Think other people find you unattractive
- See your size or shape as a sign of personal failure

- Feel uncomfortable in your own body
- Feel ashamed, self-conscious and anxious about your body

***The following are some facts related to body image:***

- 45% of healthy weight women and 23% of healthy weight men describe themselves as overweight
- 50% of 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> graders indicate that they want to be thinner
- The average woman's height is 5'4" and she weighs 144 pounds ...the average model is 5' 11" and weighs 117 pounds.
- Eating disorders are dangerous and can lead to death.
- Most models are thinner than 98% of American women
- 4 out of 5 children at age 10 are afraid of being fat
- Less than 10% of the female population are genetically destined to fit the ideal body of today's media.
- Popular magazines use make-up, lighting and air-brushing to slim down the images of their already very thin models.

**Helping Students Identify Their Own Healthy Style:**

The primary recommendation here is that students are encouraged to identify both physical and non-physical attributes that contribute to their own healthy style. Keep in mind, the middle school years are a time of great physical and social change. So students in this age-group are likely to be even more unsure about what to consider positive body attributes. Try to give them examples to begin with that do not relate to body size or shape. Examples:

- A great smile
- Sparkling eyes
- A great leader
- Athletic
- Coordinated
- A compassionate friend
- Hip
- Confident
- A stellar musician
- A convincing debater

Once students complete Worksheet 3 (*What is Your Own Healthy Style?*), they should springboard directly into Worksheet 4 (*A Vision of Beauty in the Year 2004*). Encourage them to use some of the attributes they came up with in their own personal profiles when developing the Worksheet 4 vision.

## **Changing Body Ideals Through the 20<sup>th</sup> Century:**

Throughout time, all cultures have had their own beauty ideals. Some people fit the criteria of the beauty ideals of the day and other did not... end of story. Unfortunately in western society today, there has become an obsession to conform with the “popular look” considered to be the beauty ideal of the day. To complicate matters even more, today’s popular look is one that is virtually unachievable by most of the population. The natural diversity in body shape and size is not valued and appreciated. The majority of a diverse population attempt to attain one similar look.

The degree to which people in western culture are concerned with achieving the beauty ideal is of great concern. What was previously only a mild concern with “our look” has become an obsession for many. This obsession can be a dangerous one as it has the potential to lead to a negative body image, poor self-esteem and, in some cases, disordered eating behaviors.

By looking at the changing trends of the “beauty ideal” throughout the past century, we can gain some perspective of how whimsical this beauty ideal is. Once recognized as a fleeting, whimsical idea students can decide for themselves what a more long-term, solid and lasting definition of beauty is to them, recognizing both physical and non-physical contributions to beauty.

The information on the next page was taken directly from the website “The Site” (<http://thesite.org>). This information may be useful to support your discussion of the images of beauty throughout the past century:

## *Changing Body Ideals Through the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*

**Note to Teachers:** The following information was taken from “The Site”, <http://thesite.org>. You may choose to share this directly with your students or may use it to enhance the discussion pertaining to Worksheet 2.

---

---

***“During the Victorian era, the ideal body type for women was plump, fleshy, and full-figured. They wore restrictive corsets, which made waists artificially tiny while accentuating the hips and buttocks. These corsets also caused a variety of health problems with breathing and digestion.***

***By the 1920s, the Victorian hourglass gave way to the thin flapper who bound her breasts to achieve a washboard profile. After World War I, active lifestyles added another dimension. Energy and vitality became central and body fat was perceived to contribute to inefficiency and was seen as a sign of self-indulgence.***

***By the 1950s, a thin woman with a large bust line was considered most attractive. The voluptuous (size 16) Marilyn Monroe set a new standard for women who now needed to rebuild the curves they had previously tried to bind and restrain.***

***By the 1960s, slenderness became the most important indicator of physical attractiveness following the arrival of model Twiggy. She weighed in at a shapeless [91 pounds], and had the figure of a prepubescent boy.***

***Despite an American public with increasing body weights, Playboy magazine increased the promotion of slimness between 1959 and 1978. 'Miss America' contestants were also found to be thinner over time, and winners of the pageant after 1970 consistently weighed less than the other contestants.***

***In 1975 top models and beauty queens weighed only 8% less than the average women. Today they weigh 23% less, a size achievable by less than 5% of today's female population.***

***Between 1970 and 1990, there was an overall increased emphasis on weight loss and body shape in the content of a popular women's magazine, as well as a shift to using thinner less curvaceous models in their photo shoots.***

***The 1980s beauty ideal remained slim but required a more toned and fit look. Women could no longer just 'diet' into the correct size; there was a new pressure to add exercise to achieve the toned look.***

***The 1990s body ideal was very slim and large breasted, think Pamela 'Baywatch' Anderson, an almost impossible combination for most western women.***

***Today in our modern Western society, 'thin is in' and artificial means such as liposuction have sometimes been used to lessen the appearance of hips, buttocks, and fat in general.”***

---

---

## *Worksheet 1: Defining Body Image*

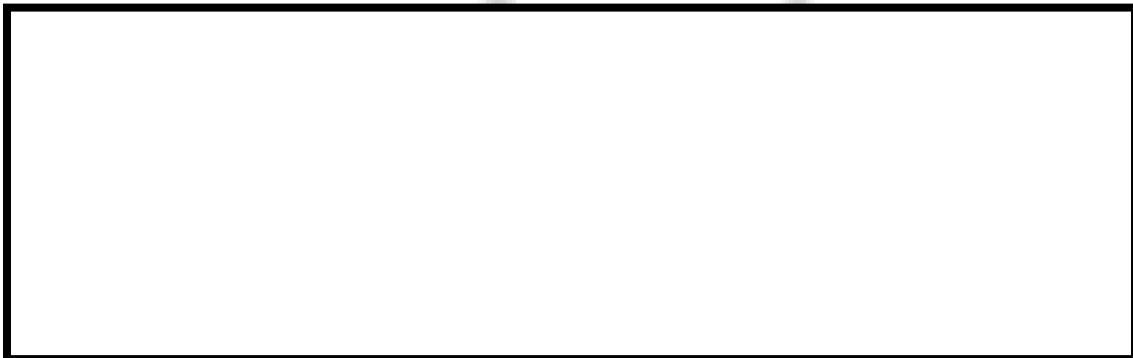
Most of us have heard the term “**body image**” before. But do we really know what that means? Take a minute and write down what you think is the proper definition of the term, **body image**:



What are some things that you think might affect a person’s body image?





If a person has a negative body image, what does that mean? Think of an example of how negative body image might impact a person in their daily life? On the contrary, how might a positive body image impact a person?







## Worksheet 2: Images of Beauty Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

The following table contains descriptions of “The Popular Look” for women during various era’s throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Read through the table and then answer and discuss, as a class, the follow-up questions:

The Era	The Popular Look	Description
Early 1900's		The very curvy hour-glass look was popular when the 20 <sup>th</sup> century began. Many women achieved this look by wearing binding corsets.
1920's		This was the “flapper” era. The flapper look was a thin, flat-chested, slim-hipped look.



1950's		The full-figured shape (curvy, with large hips and breasts) was quite popular during the 50's. The actress Marilyn Monroe was considered this decade's standard of beauty.
1960's		The model "Twiggy" popularized the extremely thin, gaunt look of this decade.
Early 1990's		Waif-like figure. Very tall, very thin look that only 4% of women are naturally meant to have. The overall look is that of a pre-teen – even among adults.
Late 1990's		Narrow hips yet large breasts. This combination is very unusual in the general population, yet women are given the message that this is the look to achieve. The result has been a dramatic increase in women (and teens) seeking breast implant surgery...surgery to achieve the popular look!!

Lesson 1: *So, what is your own healthy style?*

Worksheet 2: *Images of Beauty Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*  
(continued)

Follow-up Questions:

1. When you look around, does it appear that all body types are similar or do you think there is a natural variation or diversity (differences) in body types?
2. If they tried really hard, do you think all people could look like the “Popular Image” that exists for today? Explain your answer.
3. **Should** people try to look like this “Popular Image”...why or why not?
4. Do you think that the “Popular Image” of the different time periods promote health and well-being? Why or why not?
5. Why do you think we see the “Popular Image” of today in advertisements and on magazine covers?

## *Worksheet 3: What is Your Own Healthy Style?*

Below, please list at least 5 characteristics, attributes or things about yourself that you think are the most important characteristics that define who you are right now. Keep in mind, these things change as we have new experiences and grow-up... but for now...what defines *Your Own Healthy Style*?

---

---

### *List of Characteristics of Your Own Healthy Style:*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Worksheet 4: A Modern Image of Beauty

OK...picture this...a major advertising company has approached your class and asked you to come up with what you would like the modern day **image of beauty** to be. It is up to you. Use the knowledge you have gained on:

- the importance of a positive body image
- the natural diversity in body shapes and sizes
- awareness of non-physical characteristics as important parts of beauty and style

...and come up with the new **image of beauty**.

---

---

In the box below, describe how you would like to define a modern day **image of beauty**:



# *Your Own Healthy Style*

*A Middle School Curriculum to  
Enhance Body Image*

## *Lesson 2:*

*But, the commercials say it's true??!!*

## Lesson 2

### *But, the commercials say it's true??!!*

#### **Summary:**

Students will analyze media messages focusing on how these messages may impact their perception of themselves. Students will examine stereotypes in our society and decide for themselves if they “buy in” to these messages for themselves.

#### **Objectives:**

1. Students will recognize that media messages are constructed for specific purposes.
2. Students will evaluate how media messages are constructed to target a specific audience.
3. Students will evaluate the influence of the media on behaviors and values.
4. Students will analyze the social consequences of media messages.
5. Students will acknowledge their individual power in accepting or rejecting media messages.

#### **Suggested Time:**

Two class periods ( 2 - 50 minute sessions)

#### **Materials Needed:**

1. Video on “Making a Model
2. Worksheet 1: “The Making of a Model”
3. Teen Fashion Magazines
4. Worksheet 2: Truth in Advertising? ... You tell me!!

#### **Procedure:**

1. Students view the video, “The Making of a Model”
2. Students complete Worksheet 1: The Making of Model
3. Teacher provides examples of magazine advertisements considered to contribute to negative body image and advertisements considered to convey positive body image messages.
4. Students then peruse through popular teen magazines and identify two ads that support positive body image and two that may contribute to negative body image.
5. Students answer questions on Worksheet 2: Truth in Advertising?... You tell me!!

## *Teacher Background Information*

*The following resources have been taken from the National Eating Disorder's Association website (<http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org>). Please read through this information in order to gain a contextual association between media messages and eating disorders. Please keep in mind that the focus of this curriculum (*Your Own Healthy Style*) is on supporting the development of positive body image and this curriculum does not directly address the clinical signs, symptoms or treatment of eating disorders.*

## **The Media, Body Image, & Eating Disorders**

Eating disorders are complex conditions that arise from a variety of factors, including psychological, interpersonal, and social issues. Media images that help to create cultural definitions of beauty and attractiveness are often acknowledged as being among those factors contributing to the rise of eating disorders.

Media messages screaming "thin is in" may not directly cause eating disorders, but they help to create the context within which people learn to place a value on the size and shape of their body. To the extent that media messages like advertising and celebrity spotlights help our culture define what is beautiful and what is "good," the media's power over our development of self-esteem and body image can be incredibly strong.

### **Some Basic Facts About the Media's Influence in Our Lives:**

- ◆ According to a recent survey of adolescent girls, the media is their main source of information about women's health issues (Commonwealth Fund, 1997).
- ◆ Researchers estimate that 60% of Caucasian middle school girls read at least one fashion magazine regularly (Levine, 1997).
- ◆ Another study of mass media magazines discovered that women's magazines had 10.5 times more advertisements and articles promoting weight loss than men's magazines did (as cited in Guillen & Barr, 1994).
- ◆ A study of one teen adolescent magazine over the course of 20 years found that:
  - All of the articles contained in these magazines included statements highlighting that weight loss would improve appearance.
  - In articles about fitness or exercise plans, 74% cited "to become more attractive" as a reason to start exercising and 51% noted the need to lose weight or burn calories. (Guillen & Barr, 1994)
- ◆ The average young adolescent watches 3-4 hours of TV per day (Levine, 1997).
- ◆ A study of 4,294 network television commercials revealed that 1 out of every 3.8 commercials send some sort of "attractiveness message," telling viewers what is or is not attractive (as cited in Myers et al., 1992). These researchers estimate that the average adolescent sees over 5,260 "attractiveness messages" per year.

**Encouraging the media to present more diverse and real images of people with positive messages about health and self-esteem may not eliminate eating disorders entirely, but it will help reduce the pressures many people feel to make their bodies conform to one ideal, and in the process, reduce feelings of body dissatisfaction and ultimately decrease the potential for eating disorders.**

## Tips for Becoming a Critical Viewer of the Media

Media messages about body shape and size will affect the way we feel about ourselves and our bodies only if we let them. One of the ways we can protect our self-esteem and body image from the media's often narrow definitions of beauty and acceptability is to become a critical viewer of the media messages we are bombarded with each day. When we effectively recognize and analyze the media messages that influence us, we remember that the media's definitions of beauty and success do not have to define our self-image or potential.

### **To be a critical viewer, remember:**

- ◆ All media images and messages are constructions. They are NOT reflections of reality.
- ◆ Advertisements and other media messages have been carefully crafted with an intent to send a very specific message.
- ◆ Advertisements are created to do one thing: convince you to buy or support a specific product or service.
- ◆ To convince you to buy a specific product or service, advertisers will often construct an emotional experience that looks like reality. Remember, you are only seeing what the advertisers want you to see.
- ◆ Advertisers create their message based on what they *think* you will want to see and what they *think* will affect you and compel you to buy their product. Just because they *think* their approach will work with people like you doesn't mean it has to work with you as an *individual*.
- ◆ As individuals, we decide how to experience the media messages we encounter. We can choose to use a filter that helps us understand what the advertiser wants us to think or believe and then choose whether we want to think or believe that message. We can choose a filter that protects our self-esteem and body image.



## **Tips for Becoming a Critical Viewer of the Media** (continued)

### **To help promote healthier body image messages in the media, you can:**

- ◆ Talk back to the TV when you see an ad or hear a message that makes you feel bad about yourself or your body by promoting only thin body ideals.
- ◆ Write a letter to an advertiser you think is sending positive, inspiring messages that recognize and celebrate the natural diversity of human body shapes and sizes. Compliment their courage to send positive, affirming messages.
- ◆ Tear out the pages of your magazines that contain advertisements or articles that glorify thinness or degrade people of larger sizes. Enjoy your magazine without negative media messages about your body.
- ◆ Talk to your friends about media messages and the way they make you feel.
- ◆ Make a list of companies who consistently send negative body image messages and make a conscious effort to avoid buying their products. Write them a letter [or email] explaining why you are using your "buying power" to protest their messages.

## Worksheet 1: The Making of a Model

After viewing the video, ***The Making of a Model***, please answer the following questions:

1. What did you learn about the visual images that we see in the media (magazines, TV, movies)?
2. Why do you think the advertising companies choose to alter the images of the models rather than present them as they really are?
3. With what you now know about the definitions of **body image** (both positive and negative), do you think that by altering the true appearance of the models the advertising companies have an influence on the body image of people viewing the final advertisement? Why or why not?
4. If you could send a message to advertising companies regarding this practice of altering the images of the models, what would this message be?

Lesson 2: *But, the commercials say it's true??!!*

**Note to Teachers:**

*It is intended that you share this section, "A Look at Advertisements", with your students prior to the Worksheet 2 section of this lesson. By analyzing the advertisements here and the messages they convey, your students will be better prepared to critique advertisements for their Worksheet 2 activity.*

**A Look at Advertisements**  
*(...and their body image messages)*

There is a website called About-Face (<http://www.about-face.com>). Part of what this website does is to educate people on how the media can influence their body image (without them even knowing it!). They track different companies, magazines and advertisers looking for advertisements that contain "appearance messages". Appearance messages are messages that equate a person's value to their appearance. We know that a person's value has a whole lot more to it than just their appearance.

At About-Face, they have what is called the "Gallery of Offenders" and the "Gallery of Winners". As you might guess, the "Gallery of Offenders" is made up of examples of advertisements which could hurt a person's body image. The "Gallery of Winners" is made up of advertisements that are considered to support positive body image. Let's take a look a few examples of each:

### Gallery of Offenders:



The dress is pretty...but on this model it looks as though it should be a hospital gown. She conveys an image of weakness and frailty...not a woman who has a voice and will make a difference in this world.

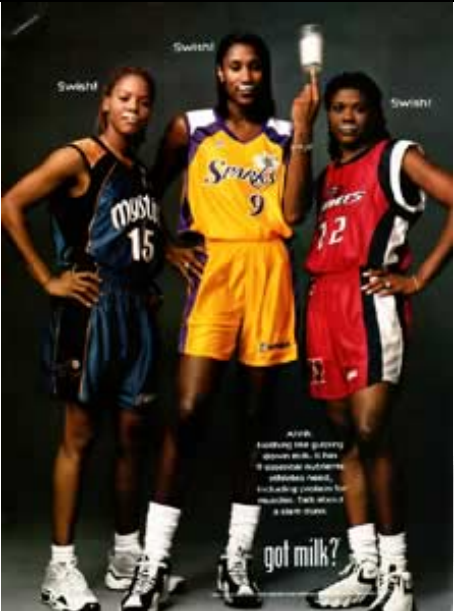
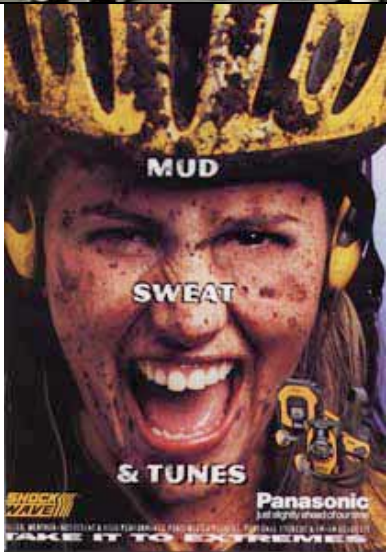



What's up with they eye make-up in this advertisement? The model is made to look almost bruised or sickly? Does she look like she has strength, health or power? Definitely...an offender



Wow...what is this advertisement trying to say? Women are not real, thinking, feeling, powerful creatures? Women are just objects like dolls? This one definitely belongs in the "Gallery of Offenders".

## *Gallery of Winners:*

	<p>This message conveys a message of being healthy and having fun. It does not contain any hidden message of “you are only valuable if you look like the a model or today’s definition of beauty”.</p>
	<p>Here is an advertisement that celebrates an active lifestyle. She sure is having fun and that message comes across loud and clear! Would she be having as much fun if she were concerned about looking like a model?</p>
	<p>This advertisement conveys a message that this is a valuable and powerful person based upon her actions and dedication. It is an advertisement for Timberland Shoes.</p>

## *Worksheet 2: Truth in Advertising... Yeah, right!*

### **Overview of the Activity:**

While perusing through a popular teen magazine, students will observe the frequency of advertisements or articles that convey the attractiveness messages, (messages telling readers what is or is not attractive). Students will discuss the impact of this type of advertising on how people feel about themselves. The activity will conclude with the students' redesigning of one of the advertisements to reflect a more healthy way of marketing the product.

### **Materials:**

- Popular teen magazines (enough to be distributed among groups of 2-3 students)
- Copies of Discussion Question Worksheet (back to be used for Ad redesigning portion of activity) - one per student group.

### **Time Needed:**

One Class Period

### **Procedure:**

1. Divide class into groups of 2-3 students and distribute teen magazines, one per group.
2. Distribute *Discussion Question Worksheet* (It is suggested that each student fill out worksheet as there are some questions which require a personal perspective.)
3. Have groups peruse through magazines for 15 minutes, bookmarking advertisements that convey "attractiveness messages".

4. Have students complete *Discussion Question Worksheet* - Questions 1-3 may be discussed and answered as a group. It is suggested that the students address Questions 4-5 independently.
5. Take 10 minutes to share discussion question answers and thoughts.
6. Students then move on to the back of the *Discussion Question Worksheet* to the *Redesign an Advertisement* activity. As a team, each group identifies an ad that may contribute to poor body image feelings among the readers and then redesigns the ad to reflect a more meaningful, healthy message.



## *Worksheet 2: Truth in Advertising... Yeah, right!*

### *Discussion Questions*

1. How do you think the average person feels after looking through this magazine?

---

---

---

2. What message do these ads send (other than "buy my product")?

---

---

---

---

3. Does this magazine celebrate/honor the differences in people? How or why not?

---

---

---

---

---

4. Think of a person you admire. Below, list the characteristics about this person that makes him/her a "beautiful person".

---

---

---

---

---

---

5. List your best characteristics

---

---

---

---

---

Lesson 2: *But, the commercials say it's true??!!*

## *Worksheet 2: Truth in Advertising... Yeah, right!*

### *Redesigning an Advertisement*

**Instructions:** Select an advertisement in your magazine that conveys an "attractiveness message" - a message telling readers what is or is not attractive. Using the space below, redesign this advertisement so that it attempts to sell the product, but uses healthy, non-harmful messages in doing so.





# *Your Own Healthy Style*

*A Middle School Curriculum to  
Enhance Body Image*

## *Lesson 3:*

*Health Comes in All Shapes  
and Sizes*

## *Lesson 3: Health Comes in All Shapes and Sizes*

### **Summary:**

Discomfort or lack of satisfaction with one's body is pervasive in our culture. However, add to this the anxiety that comes with the natural body changes of puberty and the formula for poor body image really gets a boost. Through this final lesson, students will learn about the normal changes in body shape and size that occur in puberty and adolescence. Then, they will follow up with activities that will help them grasp onto and maintain positive health behaviors relative to healthy eating and enjoyment of physical activity throughout the day. The main message here is **“No matter what your shape or size, you can reap the benefits and feel great through healthy eating and regular physical activity”**.

### **Objectives:**

1. Increase the students' knowledge and awareness of the naturally occurring changes in body shape and size that accompany puberty and adolescence.
2. Enhance student awareness of the negative impacts that dieting can have on the health and functioning of the growing person.
3. Provide students with healthy eating and physical activity guidelines that will support their growth, current health and adoption of long-term healthy behaviors.
4. Students will conduct a personal dietary assessment in order to gain an awareness of what they eat, when they eat and why they eat. They will compare their dietary behavior to healthy ideals and consider small behavior change goals for themselves.
5. Through a personal physical activity assessment, students will compare their own level of daily physical activity to activity recommendations. After analyzing the outcome of their activity diary, students will propose goals for behavior changes in order to better align themselves with activity recommendations.

### **Suggested Time:**

Three Class Periods:

1. Day 1: Focus on Body Changes in Puberty
2. Day 2: Focus on Healthy Eating
3. Day 3: Focus on Physical Activity

## Materials Needed:

### Day 1:

1. Background information sheet "The Perfect Body Myth"
2. Worksheet 1: Body Changes Discussion Guide Questions

### Day 2:

3. Background information sheet "Just Say No to Dieting"
4. Background information sheet "Just for You" (from USDA – Team Nutrition website).
5. Worksheet 2: The Healthy Eating Behavior Check
6. Worksheet 3: Your Personal Food Diary

### Day 3:

7. Background information sheet "Move, Play and Feel Your Best!" ("Move It!" activity handout or access to "Move It!" resources via the internet.)
8. Worksheet 3: Make "Move It!" Work for You

## Procedure:

### Day 1:

1. Teacher will hand out the Perfect Body Myth information sheet and lead students through the information on the handout.
2. Using Worksheet 1 as a guide, a facilitated classroom discussion will follow on the topic of changes to expect in body shape and size during puberty and adolescence.

### Day 2:

1. Teacher will hand out the "**Just Say No to Dieting**" and the "**Just for You**" handouts and go over this information with the students, fielding questions from the students. There is likely to be lots of comments about fad diets from the students. The main message should be "maintain healthy eating (following the recommendations of the **Food Guide Pyramid and U.S. Dietary Guidelines**) through this important growth phase of your life."

***For teachers wanting to review the Food Guide Pyramid and/or Dietary Guidelines please go to the following websites for information and resources:***

**USDA Team Nutrition**  
**YourSELF Middle School Nutrition Education Kit**  
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Educators/yourself.html>

**U.S. Department of Agriculture,**  
**Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion**  
<http://www.usda.gov/cnpp/>

2. Students will complete section one of Worksheet 2: The Healthy Eating Behavior Check. Encourage discussion regarding strategies for making positive, healthy behavior changes.
3. Students will complete section two of Worksheet 2 over a period of 3 days (this may be a good weekend activity). Students should try to record three days worth of food intake although this may be made shorter if time is limited. The longer the time period of recording food intake, the more meaningful the data.

**Note to Teachers:**

***By keeping a 3 day food diary, students will gain an overview of what their daily food intake and behaviors look like. It would be good to have students compare the results of their diaries to the recommendations (relative proportions of food groups and number of servings of each group) of the Food Guide Pyramid. If you would like to take this activity one step further you could have your students analyze the nutrient contents of their three day food diaries. In order to do this you need access to some diet analysis software (Diet Analysis Plus, available through Wadsworth Publishing Co., is highly recommended). If this software is not available to you, you may go to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's, "Interactive Healthy Eating Index" website (<http://147.208.9.133/>) which allows for analysis of personal food diary nutrient composition***

4. Teacher- will lead a follow-up discussion on student impressions of the information and activity. Students should be encouraged to set realistic goals for themselves. One or two small changes such as, "remember to eat fruit at breakfast" or "have milk instead of soda at lunch" should be encouraged.
5. Teacher should conclude this section with leading a discussion on how it is possible to be healthy at any shape or size. The role of healthy eating and regular physical activity in maintaining a healthy body should be the emphasis of the discussion.

**Day 3:**

1. Students review a sample "Activity Pyramid".
2. Students assess their own personal activity habits by keeping an activity diary (Worksheet 4).
3. A discussion of daily activity recommendations follows and students gain awareness of where their activity habits fit into these recommendations.
4. As they did with healthy eating habits, students will set small, achievable goals related to changes they can make in their daily habits to incorporate more physical activity. Examples to share with students may include, "Take my dog for a walk", "Limit TV/videogame time to 1 hour and go shoot hoops instead", "Walk to school", "Use stairs instead of elevator whenever possible".

## **The Perfect Body Myth**

### ***A Look at Teen Body Size & Growth Patterns***

#### **The Perfect Body?... Forget About It!**

Guess what the big news is? There is no **one** perfect body size! Yes, that's it! We are all unique and these differences are a reason to celebrate! One thing that is common to all of us, however, is that our bodies change as we grow into adulthood. If you are currently a teenager or a preteen, you've probably noticed many changes in your body over the past few years. The teenage years are a time of life where we grow faster than any time other than infancy. About twenty percent of adult height and anywhere from 40-80 percent of adult weight is gained between the ages of 12 and 18. Not only is the mere size of the body changing but the shape and proportions are shifting as well during this time. Much of this change, particularly if we don't expect it, can make us feel anxious or worried. But, as they say down under...."No Worries"...it happens to everyone!! Let's take a moment here to investigate exactly what body changes often occur during adolescence.

#### **The Growing Adolescent:**

Between the ages of 9 and 12, the body is readying itself for the explosive growth that is about to take place. During these years, extra fat is deposited to provide for additional energy during the rapid growth phase of the teenage years. In a society such as ours, that has become so fat-phobic (meaning: afraid of fat), these normal changes at puberty changes cause some kids to worry or be disgusted by their own body. However, this temporary fat accumulation during puberty is a normal, expected stage of growth and should **not** be interpreted as obesity or a weight problem. This extra fat usually disappears by the late teen years.

The age that your adolescent growth spurt begins varies among individuals and definitely is different when comparing males and females. Generally, girls begin their growth spurt two years earlier than boys. However, this growth spurt is shorter in length among girls. In girls, the growth spurt usually begins between ages 10 and 12. Elevations in the female sex hormone (estrogen) occur resulting in the widening of the hips and an increased deposition of fat in certain areas of the body (hips, buttocks, breasts).

In fact, these hormonal changes cause the percent of body weight from fat to increase by about 20% in teen girls. Muscle mass also increases in girls during the adolescent growth spurt - although not to the same degree as this increases in boys.

In boys, the adolescent growth spurt usually begins around age 12 to 14. This growth spurt lasts longer in boys and they also grow faster. In fact, during the peak year of adolescent growth, a boy's height can increase about 4 inches and his weight by leaps and bounds! As is the case with girls, the height, weight and body proportions all change dramatically during the growth spurt years for boys. The growth begins with the lengthening of the legs and ends with the broadening of the shoulders and chest. Contrasting to the situation with girls, the percent of body weight made up of fat decreases in boys by about 12 to 15 percent during the adolescent growth spurt. The amount of muscle and other lean tissue increases, making up for the lost fat.

### **Healthy Eating and An Active Lifestyle - A Winning Combination!**

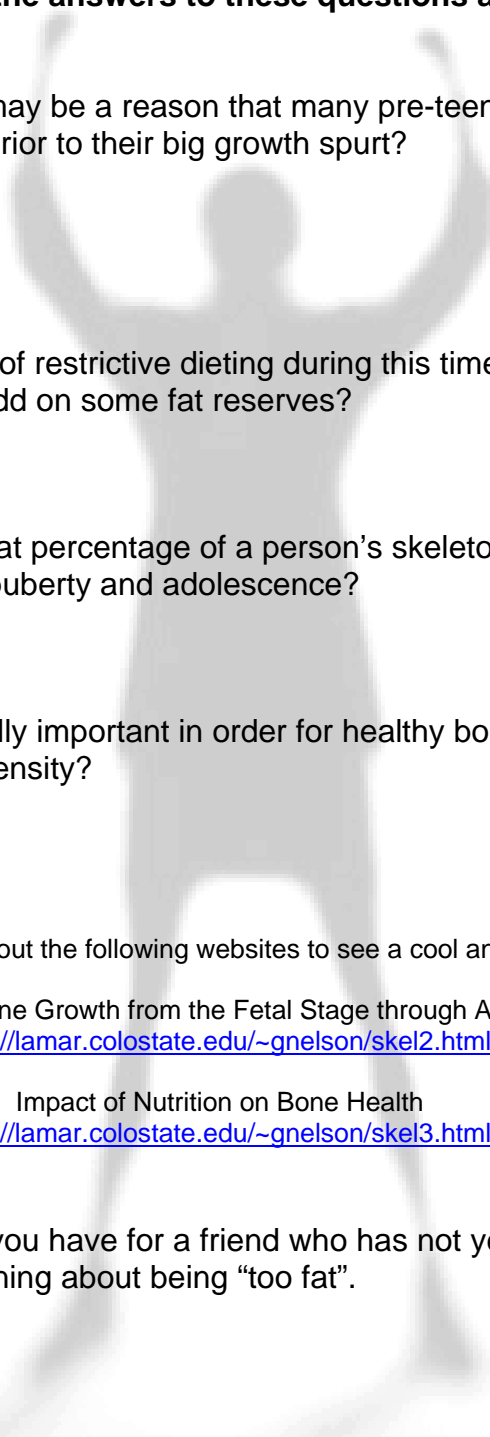
What is described above is the typical growth pattern for adolescent girls and boys. However, every individual is different and genetics play a large role in the individual's growth schedule. One thing we know that is not different among teens is that if you adopt unhealthy eating patterns during these important years of growth you can really do harm to your full growth potential. Eating smart is an important part of growing healthy! Using the Food Guide Pyramid as your guide, try to eat at least the minimum number of servings from all five of the major food groups. If you do this, and avoid eating too many foods from the tip of the pyramid, you are giving yourself the best chance possible to grow into the healthy and active adult body that is soon to be you.

### **Some More Facts Related to Healthy Eating, Regular Exercise and Growth!**

- ☐ Calcium intake during adolescence is particularly critical as this is a very important phase in bone density formation (calcium is a major mineral found in bones). In fact, it is during these rapid growth years that about 45% of adult skeletal mass is gained. Not getting enough of calcium during the growing years a person can cause gradual bone loss and can ultimately result in the crippling disease osteoporosis later in life. According to a survey conducted by the United States Department of Agriculture, 9 out of 10 teen girls and 7 out of 10 teen boys are not meeting their recommended calcium intake. What can you do to be sure you are getting enough calcium each day?
- ☐ Did you know that healthy eating and regular physical activity affect your ability to think and learn? It's true! Studies have shown that when children and teens diet or restrict their intake of healthy foods, their scores on tests actually drop! Are you setting yourself up to do well in school by eating a healthy breakfast and keeping your mind and body active? What goal can you set for yourself to do better here?
- ☐ Did you know that children and teens today are less active than any generation that has come before? Why?? Well, there are many activities that are really entertaining that do not require much physical exertion...consider television, video games, computer time for example. How much time do you spend doing these sedentary activities? What goal could you set for yourself so that you can mix in some moderate to high energy activities in your day? Being active keeps you healthy!

## **Worksheet 1: Body Changes Discussion Guide Questions**

**Individually or in a small group, address the following questions. Please take the time to discuss the answers to these questions as a class.**

- 
1. What do you think may be a reason that many pre-teens and teens get deposits of fat just prior to their big growth spurt?
  2. What may be a risk of restrictive dieting during this time when your body wants to naturally add on some fat reserves?
  3. On the average, what percentage of a person's skeleton (bones) is established during puberty and adolescence?
  4. What nutrient is vitally important in order for healthy bone growth and good strong bone density?

If you have time, check out the following websites to see a cool animation of growing bones.

Animated Bone Growth from the Fetal Stage through Adulthood

<http://lamar.colostate.edu/~gnelson/skel2.html>

Impact of Nutrition on Bone Health

<http://lamar.colostate.edu/~gnelson/skel3.html>

5. What advice might you have for a friend who has not yet had their growth spurt but is complaining about being "too fat".



## *Just Say “NO” to Dieting!*



In the previous section, you learned about the many changes that are happening regarding the growth of your body during your teen years. Although some of these changes may be uncomfortable and there may be times where you feel as though you are “chunking out”, the best advice for you is --- DON'T DIET!

Just forget the word **diet** ever existed. Restrictive diets do not work.

In fact, in many cases restrictive diets leave people fatter, with slower metabolisms and less healthy than when they started. And for you, the growing teen, skipping meals or following weird diets can actually keep you from getting the nutrients you need to grow as healthy as you can be. It is just not smart to try to lose weight when your body is changing and growing.

The following is a Top 10 Countdown for why you should **not** diet!

1. You can slow down your growth. That includes your muscles and your bones.	6. You feel LOUSY when you diet – mostly from lack of good nutrition, but also from being hungry all the time. You get irritable, cranky, and your ability to cope decreases. You explode at friends and family.
2. Because you are not getting enough calories, you probably are not getting the vitamins and minerals you need. You may weaken your immune system and get sick more often.	7. You're definitely NOT in top mental and physical condition. Do you feel like competing in sports or even rollerblading when you are starved and your stomach is growling? What about studying for that big TEST? I DON'T THINK SO!
3. If you are skipping meals, you may actually lower your metabolism. When you skip meals, your body thinks you are starving and conserves extra calories. That means what you eat may be stored as fat more easily.	8. Don't set yourself up for that vicious diet-go-round. That means, telling yourself you are NOT going to eat any of those very favorite cookies that your mother made...then giving in and eating some...then feeling so lousy, that you eat again. Don't even get on that merry-go-round! You end up feeling depressed and lower your self-esteem or confidence in yourself. Go ahead, have a couple of cookies. It's okay. Really!
4. Let's face it. You don't have that great looking glow when you diet. Your skin and hair look dull, and your nails can become brittle.	9. Did you know that when you deprive yourself of the foods you love, you actually overeat on other foods? Remember how we talked about moderation? That's the key – eating all the foods you want in sensible quantities! That doesn't mean 3 cups of ice cream, but rather, ½ cup.
5. You can hurt your metabolism by constantly gaining and losing. Each time you lose weight, you lose muscle. When you gain, you mostly gain fat, not muscle. When you lose muscle, you lose some of your metabolism – or lower it! That means your body does not need as many calories for energy. So preserve that metabolism by NOT dieting.	10. BE YOUR BEST! EAT WELL, BE ACTIVE AND DON'T DIET!





**Note: in this space the handout “Just for You” from Team Nutrition will be inserted. On the Your Own Healthy Style website, we will just link to this team nutrition handout.**

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Educators/yrs1f09.pdf>

## *Worksheet 2: The Healthy Eating Behavior Check*

So, dieting is clearly out of the picture. Yet, you're not quite sure if your eating habits are truly healthy. By completing this healthy eating behavior checklist you will increase your awareness of your current eating behaviors and you will likely find some areas for improvement (we all have areas for improvement!). This checklist is a way of "getting honest" with yourself regarding:

- What you eat
- When you eat
- Why you eat

Get started on the road to healthier, happier eating!

The following is a list of eating behaviors. Put a check mark in the box next to the ones that describe eating behaviors you believe you have:

- ☐ **Do you plan ahead what you will eat? If you do, you are more likely to eat healthier foods rather than grabbing just anything that's available.**
- ☐ **Are you sure to eat breakfast each morning? Remember – it gets your metabolism going for the day and you won't get as hungry before lunch.**
- ☐ **Do you take your time when you eat? Time yourself the next time you are eating. Do you take 20 minutes to finish your meal? If not, slow down. It takes 20 minutes for the signal that your stomach is full to reach your brain – kind of like a slow computer!**
- ☐ **Do you drink plenty of water? Water is a magical nutrient for keeping all of our body systems (including our brains) working well. Also, drinking water rather than soda-pop limit the amount of empty sugar calories you take in each day.**
- ☐ **Do you listen to your body signals when you are hungry or full? You don't need to eat all the food on your plate. Cue into your hunger. If you are not hungry, don't eat. Before you eat a snack right after dinner, ask yourself, "Am I really hungry, or am I eating out of boredom, stress, or whatever reason I am creating?"**

So, are there any check marks in the boxes above? If so, congratulate yourself on your healthy eating behavior. For those boxes without check marks, select one you'd like to focus on improving. If you start by trying to change just one behavior, you are more likely to have success than if you try to change many behaviors at once. Write in the space below how you might begin to remember to adopt this behavior each day:

---

---

---

	Food Eaten	How Much?	Pyramid Servings
Example Morning	Orange Juice Ham on English Muffin	1 ½ Cup 2 ounces 1 muffin	2 fruit group servings 1 meat group serving 2 bread group servings
<u>Day 1:</u> <u>Morning</u>			
<u>Mid-day</u>			
<u>Evening</u>			
<u>Snacks</u>			
<u>Day 2:</u> <u>Morning</u>			

<b><u>Mid-day</u></b>			
<b><u>Evening</u></b>			
<b><u>Snacks</u></b>			
<b><u>Day 3: Morning</u></b>			
<b><u>Mid-day</u></b>			
<b><u>Evening</u></b>			
<b><u>Snacks</u></b>			

After you have analyzed your 3 day food diary...in the space below write down one or two goals you would like to set for yourself in order to have healthier eating habits:

---



---



---



---



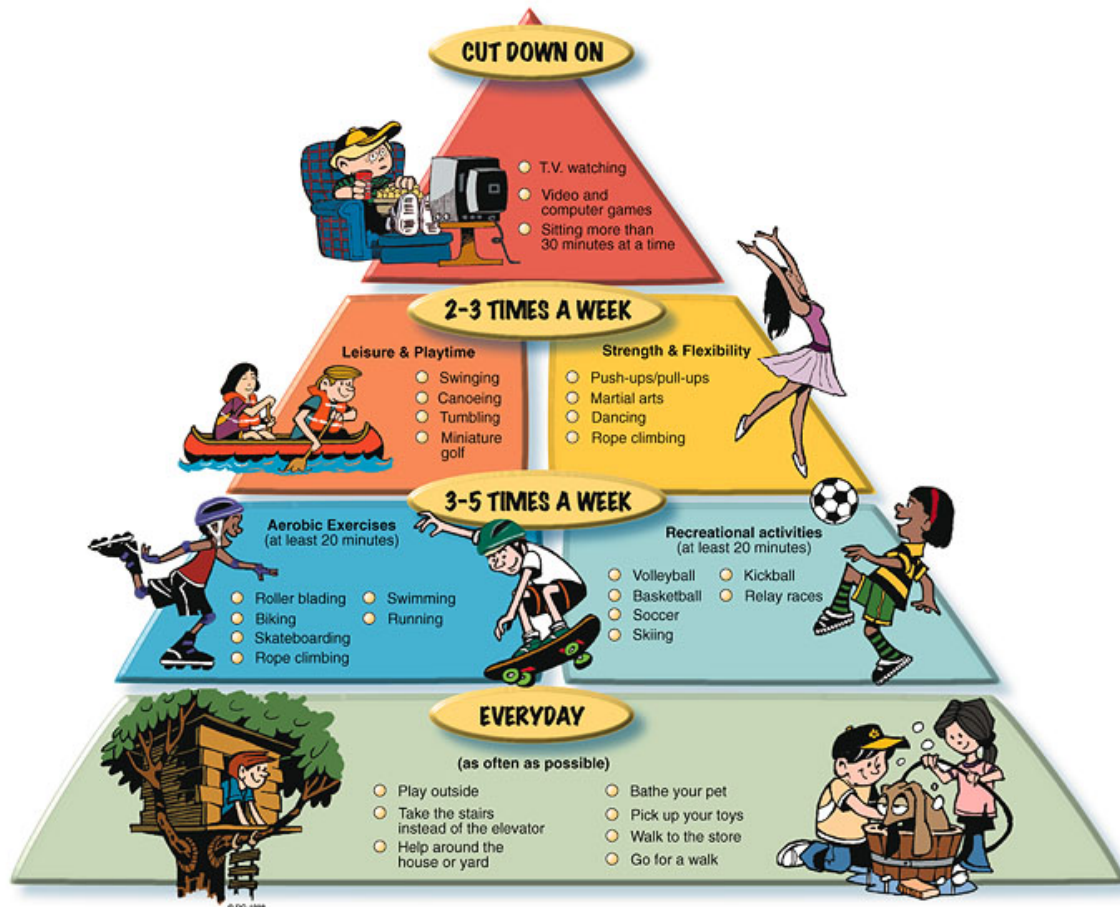
---



---

Lesson 3: Health Comes in All Shapes and Sizes

## Activity Pyramid:



The above activity pyramid was adapted from: University of Missouri, University Extension. Publication GH1800 — Reviewed May 1, 2001.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (a national agency of our government that monitors health issues), the following are the activity recommendations for pre-teen and teens in America:

- All adolescents should be physically active daily, or nearly every day, as part of play, games, sports, work, transportation, recreation, physical education, or planned exercise, in the context of family, school, and community activities. [**Note: Current recommendations say be active for 60 minutes each day! Keep in mind that doesn't mean run for an hour a day, it means just get off the couch and play!**]
- Adolescents should engage in three or more sessions per week of activities that last 20 minutes or more at a time and that require moderate to vigorous levels of exertion.

## *Worksheet 4: Are you Moving Enough?*

Now that you have had a chance to look over the activity pyramid, you probably have some idea of what “the health experts” agree is a healthy level of daily activity for a person your age. Basically, this is it...Get at least 60 minutes of moderate activity most days of the week. This amount of activity can usually be achieved by simply turning off the TV, unplugging the X-Box, Game-Cube or PS-2 and heading outside for some playtime with a friend. You don’t need to head to the gym like your parents or teachers may do. Kids have a huge advantage when it comes to fitness...kids can play, play, play!

OK, now it is time to get real. What is your current level of physical activity? In order to figure this out, you need to keep track of your activities for a week. Then, you’ll have a better idea whether or not you need to make some changes.

Use the table on the back of this page to keep track of your activity for a week. Be sure to record what the activity was and how much time you spent doing it.

Have fun!

## *Worksheet 4: Are you Moving Enough?*

*(continued)*

### *Activity Diary*

Day of the Week	Physical Activity	How Long?
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		

## *Worksheet 4: Are you Moving Enough?*

*(continued)*

Please answer the following questions after you have completed your activity diary:

- 1) On average, how many minutes of moderate activity do you get a day according to your Activity Diary ?
- 2) When you consider that recommendations are that you get be active for at least 60 minutes each day, do you think you are getting enough physical activity each day? Why or why not?
- 3) Please list two things you are willing to change so that you can fit in more physical activity into your life:



# *Your Own Healthy Style*

*A Middle School Curriculum to  
Enhance Body Image*

*Additional Resources  
For  
Teachers*

## *Teacher Resources...*

### *Body Image*

- The Body Positive  
<http://www.thebodypositive.org>  
  
Note: There is another Body Positive website at:  
<http://www.thebodypositive.com>  
...it is also a very good resource.
- Girls Inc.  
<http://www.girlsinc.org>
- BodyWise (a component of Girl Power – a program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services):

BodyWise Resources for Students

<http://www.girlpower.gov/girlarea/bodywise/bodyimage/index.htm>

BodyWise Handbook for Adults

<http://www.4woman.gov/BodyImage/bodywise/bodywise.htm>

### *Eating Disorders*

- National Eating Disorders Association  
<http://nationaleatingdisorders.org>

### *Healthy Eating and Active Living*

- Action for Healthy Kids  
[www.actionforhealthykids.org](http://www.actionforhealthykids.org)
- Project LEAN (Leaders Encouraging Activity and Nutrition)  
[www.californiaprojectlean.org](http://www.californiaprojectlean.org)
- USDA Team Nutrition  
[www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Default.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Default.htm)
- Role of Michigan Schools in Promoting Healthy Weight: A Consensus Paper  
[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/healthyweight\\_13649\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/healthyweight_13649_7.pdf)



# *Your Own Healthy Style*

*A Middle School Curriculum to  
Enhance Body Image*

*Resources  
For  
Parents*

## **How Parents Can Help to Support Positive Body Image**

- 1. Gain a clear understanding of your own body image and attitudes related to body image.**
  - Am I happy/comfortable with my body?
  - Do I make negative remarks about my body? Positive remarks?
  - Do I pass judgment on people based upon their body shape/size?
  - Do I send messages to my child regarding their body shape and size that could be interpreted as, "I'd like you more if you looked different."
- 2. Eat healthfully and be active.**
  - Modeling the basics of healthy living is the best gift you can give your child. Make healthy foods available and accessible. Enjoy family walks, hikes, bike rides and ski days. Live life to its fullest!
- 3. Avoid dieting**
  - Each year greater numbers of young children are engaging in dieting behaviors. Restrictive dieting is inappropriate and potentially harmful for growing children. Rather, during these early years, help your child to establish healthy eating behaviors that will last a lifetime.
- 4. Enjoy your own sense of style.**
  - You have your own wonderful unique characteristics and manner. Allow this style to shine through and show your child that joy comes from being your authentic self.
- 5. Talk with your child about media messages that equate a person's value with their body shape or size.** Help your child to view these media messages as a form of prejudice.
- 6. Support and nourish your child's "Own Healthy Style".** Your child is trying hard to define who he/she is and feel comfortable in the body they were given. Listen, express your appreciation for their unique characteristics (both physical and non-physical) and let them know you love them as they are.

## *Parent Resources...*

### *Body Image*

- The Body Positive  
<http://www.thebodypositive.org>  
  
Note: There is another Body Positive website at:  
<http://www.thebodypositive.com>  
...it is also a very good resource.
- Girls Inc.  
<http://www.girlsinc.org>
- BodyWise (a component of Girl Power – a program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services):

BodyWise Resources for Students

<http://www.girlpower.gov/girlarea/bodywise/bodyimage/index.htm>

BodyWise Handbook for Adults

<http://www.4woman.gov/BodyImage/bodywise/bodywise.htm>

- Dads and Daughters  
<http://www.dadsanddaughters.org/index.html>

### *Eating Disorders*

- National Eating Disorders Association: Information for Parents  
[http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/p.asp?WebPage\\_ID=289](http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/p.asp?WebPage_ID=289)
  - Ten Things Parents Can Do to Prevent Eating Disorders  
[http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/p.asp?WebPage\\_ID=322&Profile\\_ID=41171](http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/p.asp?WebPage_ID=322&Profile_ID=41171)

### *Healthy Eating and Active Living*

- Mission Nutrition: Information for Parents  
[http://www.missionnutrition.ca/english/parents/parents\\_home.asp](http://www.missionnutrition.ca/english/parents/parents_home.asp)
- Nutrition Explorations: Family Guide to Health Eating  
<http://www.nutritionexplorations.com/parents/main.asp>
- Why Milk Matters Now for Children and Teens  
[http://www.nichd.nih.gov/milk/milk\\_facts.htm](http://www.nichd.nih.gov/milk/milk_facts.htm)
- Kids Health (for parents)  
[http://kidshealth.org/parent/nutrition\\_fit/index.html](http://kidshealth.org/parent/nutrition_fit/index.html)